

Open in prayer

Read Titus 2

¹ But you are to proclaim things consistent with sound teaching.

² Older men are to be self-controlled, worthy of respect, sensible, and sound in faith, in love, in endurance.

³ In the same way, older women are to be reverent in behaviour, not slanderers, not slaves to excessive drinking, teachers of good, ⁴ so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands and to love their children, ⁵ to be self-controlled, pure, workers at home, kind, and in submission to their husbands, so that God's word will not be slandered.

⁶ In the same way, encourage the young men to be self-controlled.

⁷ In everything make yourself an example of good works with integrity and dignity in your teaching. ⁸ Your message is to be sound beyond reproach, so that any opponent will be ashamed, because he doesn't have anything bad to say about us.

⁹ Slaves are to submit to their masters in everything, and to be well-pleasing, not talking back ¹⁰ or stealing, but demonstrating utter faithfulness, so that they may adorn the teaching of God our Saviour in everything.

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹² instructing us to deny godlessness and worldly lusts and to live in a sensible, righteous, and godly way in the present age, ¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope, and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. ¹⁴ He gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to cleanse for himself a people for his own possession, eager to do good works.

¹⁵ Proclaim these things; and encourage and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.

Introduction

R Be self-controlled. Be pure. Love your husband. Love your children. Submit. Do not slander. Do not steal. Be above reproach in everything.

Å Who can live like this? That is the question, is it not? That is the question that arises in my chest as I read Titus 2.

R Paul says, teach these things. Do not soften them. Do not negotiate the terms. Do not look for the exit. Teach them.

ð But who can live like this?

ð This is the tension. This is the impossibility. This is where we must sit before we rush to the answer.

ð The commands are overwhelming. Older men. Older women. Young women. Young men. Slaves. Every season. Every station. Every role. Be this. Do that. Live like this.

Å And we ask, how?

P But here is the truth that holds everything together. Here is the answer that Paul gives. Christ's saving grace trains you for godliness. Not your effort. Not your willpower. Not your performance. Grace.

R So this morning, we will see three things. First, the command. Teach sound doctrine. That is Titus 2:1. Sound doctrine is not merely correct theology. It is teaching that produces godliness. Second, the conduct. Live godly lives. That is Titus 2:2-10. Grace produces godliness in every role, every season, every station. Third, the cause. Christ's grace trains. That is Titus 2:11-14. Grace does not save you and leave you. Grace saves you and trains you.

ð So how? How can any of us live up to this?

1) The Command: Teach Sound Doctrine (Titus 2:1)

R **Verse 1.** But you are to proclaim things consistent with sound teaching.

□ But you are to proclaim. But. Note the But. Paul has just finished describing false teachers in Titus 1:10-16. Men who profess to know God. Men who claim to speak for Him. Men whose mouths must be stopped because they are ruining whole households. And here is the rub. The false teachers in Crete deny God by their works. They talk the talk. But they do not live the life.

R The but stands between the false teachers and Titus. Titus, you are not to be like them. You will proclaim things consistent with sound teaching. The word used for sound conveys the idea of healthiness, of wholesomeness, not merely what sounds right. Not merely what is technically accurate. But you are to proclaim things that produce life.

□ Consider Crete. The island had a reputation. Paul quotes their own poet in chapter 1. Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons. Moral chaos. A place where truth was scarce. And men's appetites ruled. And into that chaos came false teachers. Peddling religion that cost nothing and changed nothing. They gathered crowds. They gained influence. They destroyed families.

˘ The church needed a credible witness. Not a louder voice. Not a cleverer argument. A life that matched the message. This is why the commands matter. This is why Paul does not soften them. This is why he will not

negotiate terms.

R Paul described his mission in **Titus 1:1**. For the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness. This is why Paul charges Titus *to* proclaim things consistent with sound teaching because the truth is meant to lead to godliness. Not theological precision for its own sake. Not winning arguments. Not building a reputation. The truth that leads to godliness.

o And so we must ask ourselves, what is consistent with sound teaching? Is it merely correct theology? A well-ordered systematic theology? A precise confession of faith? No. Sound doctrine is not less than correct theology. But it is never merely correct theology. It is teaching that accords with godliness. It is truth that produces fruit. It is doctrine that does something. A tree is known by its fruit. A doctrine is known by its fruit. If our doctrine is truly sound, it will produce godliness.

o So let me press the question into your heart. Does yours? Does your doctrine produce godliness in your life?

A It is possible to hold the right words. It is possible to affirm the right confessions. It is possible to recite the right creeds. But if your life produces nothing but the same dry dust of the world, what then? If your theology fills your head but never reaches your hands, what then?

R Fruit is the evidence. If our doctrine is truly sound, it will produce godliness. Titus must proclaim sound doctrine.

A A tree is known by its fruit. A doctrine is known by its fruit. Consider the man who can recite the catechism. But cannot control his temper. Consider the woman who knows her Bible. But not care about her neighbour. Consider the church that confesses Christ boldly on Sunday. But deny Him by their works on Monday. What is the fruit?

R If our doctrine is truly sound, it will produce godliness.

R The question is, what is sound doctrine? Is it merely correct theology? No. Sound doctrine is not less than correct theology, but it is never merely correct theology. It is teaching that accords with godliness. Fruit is the evidence. If our doctrine is truly sound, it will produce godliness.

If sound doctrine produces godliness, what does that godliness look like? Paul shows us in **Titus 2:2-10**.

2) **The Conduct: Live Godly Lives** (Titus 2:2-10)

R I want you to see what Paul is doing here. He is addressing the various members of a Roman household. Older men in verse 2. Older women in verse 3. Young women in verse 4. Young men in verse 6. Slaves in verse 9. Every season of life. Every social station. No one is left out. No one is exempt.

R The Greco-Roman household had order. Hierarchies. And Paul uses that framework. But he is not just reinforcing cultural expectations. Paul transforms them. He takes the familiar shape of the household and fills it with something new. Something radical. Something that only grace can produce.

R This isn't just lists of random ethical advice. Do not reduce it down to a checklist. Older men, be this. Older women, do that. Young women, here is your list. Young men, here is yours. And Slaves, obey. Check the boxes. Move on. That is not what Paul is doing at all.

P Paul is describing what grace produces. In every role. In every season. In every station. Grace isn't idle. Grace isn't passive. Grace works. Grace shapes. Grace forms. Grace produces godliness in the most ordinary places of our lives.

P Consider the older men in verse 2. They are to be self-controlled. Worthy of respect. Sensible. Sound in faith, in love, in endurance. Not perfect. Not sinless. But steady. Mature. Reliable. The kind of men who can lead a local church.

P Consider the older women in verse 3. They are to be reverent in behaviour. Not slanderers. Not slaves to excessive drinking. They are to be teachers of good. And here is the beauty of it. they are to train the young women. The older generation investing in the next. Not criticising. Not complaining. Training.

R Consider the young women in verse 4. They are to love their husbands. Love their children. be self-controlled. Pure. Workers at home. Kind. In submission to their husbands. Every word cuts against the grain of our age. Every word.

R Consider the young men in verse 6. They are to be self-controlled. It's kind of surprising that Paul doesn't say more. Young men, be self-controlled. But I tell you what, in a world of endless appetites, endless distractions, endless temptations, self-control's where the game's at. Get that right you get life right.

R And consider Titus himself in verse 7. He is to be an example. In everything. Good works. Integrity. Dignity. Sound speech beyond reproach. The leader must model what he commands.

R And then there are the slaves in verse 9. Paul moves from the household to

the workplace. From voluntary relationships to involuntary ones. From those who choose their place to those who have no choice at all. And he says to slaves, submit to your masters. Be well-pleasing. Do not talking back. Do not steal. Demonstrate utter faithfulness.

on Now step back and see the thread. Grace produces godliness in every role, in every season, in every station. But why does it matter? Paul tells us why. Three times he tells us why. Grace produces older women who train the young women, verse 5, so that God's word will not be slandered. Grace produces young men like Titus whose conduct is above reproach, verse 8, so that any opponent will be ashamed. Grace produces slaves whose work adorns the gospel, verse 10, so that they may adorn the teaching of God our Saviour in everything.

ð Here's the thing. The world is watching. Our lives are not private. Our conduct is not inconsequential. How we live either slanders the word of God or adorns it. Either brings shame to the gospel or lends it credibility. This is why it matters. Because the gospel is on display in our lives. And the world is reading our lives.

ð So let me make it practical. Does your life in your home adorn the gospel or disgrace it? Does your marriage adorn the gospel or disgrace it? Does your work adorn the gospel or disgrace it? Does your parenting adorn the gospel or disgrace it?

Å Consider the older woman who has walked with Christ for decades. She knows the Word. She has seen the faithfulness of God. But she uses her tongue to tear down. She slanders. She gossips. She complains. What does the world see? What do the younger woman learn?

Å Consider the young man who claims to follow Christ. He is in church on Sunday. He sings the songs. He nods at the sermon. But Monday through Saturday he is driven by appetite. He cannot say no to lust. He cannot say no to greed. He cannot say no to the crowd. What does the world see? What does the opponent say?

Å Consider the worker. The employee. The one under authority. Does he work with integrity? Does she serve with faithfulness? Or does the gospel hang its head in shame because of a lazy hand or a grumbling spirit?

ð The standard is overwhelming. Do you feel it? Older men, are you sound in faith, in love, and in endurance? Older women, are you reverent in behaviour, training the next generation? Younger women, do you love your husband and your children with a pure and self-controlled heart? Younger men, are you self-controlled in a world that celebrates every appetite? Slaves, do you adorn

the teaching of God in everything?

Ø Who can live like this? Sound teaching produces godliness amongst various groups. Titus must teach sound doctrine that produces godly conduct. And so must we.

Ø But how can we live up to this? Sit in that question for a moment. Do not rush past it. Do not look for the exit. Let the weight of it press in. Let the impossibility settle over you like a heavy blanket. How can we live up to this?

3) The Cause: Christ's Grace Trains (Titus 2:11-14)

Ø We have felt the weight. We have heard the commands. Older men. Older women. Young women. Young men. Slaves. Be this. Do that. Live like this. And we have asked the question, who can live like this? How can any of us live up to this standard?

P Now breathe. Because Paul does not leave us in the tension. He does not pile up demands and walk away. He does not say, try harder. He does not say, do better. He says, look. Look at what God has done. Look at what God is doing. Look at what God will do.

R **Verse 11**, For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people.

~ The grace of God has appeared. That is incarnation. God stepped into history. Not a messenger. Not a prophet. Not an angel. God Himself. The eternal Word took flesh. The invisible became visible. The distant drew near. Grace is not a concept. Grace is not a principle. Grace is a Person. And He has appeared.

R But notice what this grace does. It does not merely forgive. It does not merely pardon. It trains. **Verse 12**, instructing us to deny godlessness and worldly lusts and to live in a sensible, righteous, and godly way in the present age.

P This is where your hope lives. This is where the relief floods in. Grace is not passive. Grace is not idle. Grace trains. It instructs. It disciplines. It shapes. It is patient but relentless. It does not leave us as it found us.

R Consider the athlete. He does not become strong by wishing. He trains. Day after day. Repetition. Discipline. Denial. He says no to what weakens. He says yes to what strengthens. And over time, the impossible becomes natural.

R Consider the craftsman. He does not master his trade by good intentions. He trains. He practices. He fails. He learns. He returns to the work. His hands are shaped by the labour. His eye is trained by the details.

So it is with grace. Grace takes the raw material of your life and shapes it. Grace takes the stubborn heart and softens it. Grace takes the wandering affections and anchors them. Grace takes the clenched fist and opens it. Grace does not save you and leave you. Grace saves you and trains you.

And what does this training look like? It teaches us to say no. No to godlessness. No to worldly lusts. No to the appetites that promise life and deliver death. And it teaches us to say yes. Yes to sensibility. Yes to righteous. Yes to godliness. Not reluctantly. Not begrudgingly. But eagerly.

R Verse 13, while we wait for the blessed hope, and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

P We wait. That is the posture of the Christian life. We are not home yet. We are not finished yet. The training continues. The shaping continues. And we wait for the One who will complete what He has begun.

When Paul calls Jesus our great God and Saviour, he is not being casual. He is applying Old Testament titles reserved for the LORD Himself. In Isaiah, Yahweh says of Himself, I am the Lord, and there is no other Saviour. Paul takes that title and gives it to Jesus. Jesus is not a noble man. He is not a good teacher. He is not a moral example. He is God in human flesh. The One who saves.

R Verse 14, He gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to cleanse for himself a people for his own possession, eager to do good works.

A He gave himself. No one took His life. He laid it down. For us. To redeem us. To purchase us. To set us apart from all lawlessness. And to cleanse us. Not just to forgive. To purify. To make us clean.

R There is an Old Testament pattern here. God redeemed Israel from Egypt. He brought them out of slavery. He cleansed them. He made them His own possession. He set them apart as a holy people. And now, in Christ, that pattern repeats. God redeems a people from slavery to sin. He cleanses them. He makes them His own. He sets them apart. Just as God redeemed Israel from Egypt and cleansed them for His own possession, Jesus gave Himself to redeem us from all lawlessness and to cleanse us for Himself. The pattern of redemption has not changed. God saves a people for Himself.

And that people is eager for good works. Not reluctant. Not begrudging. Not dragging their feet. Eager. Willing. Zealous. That is what grace produces. That is the goal of grace's training. Not duty. Not obligation. Not grim determination. Eagerness. A hunger for holiness. A thirst for righteousness. A

longing to please the One who saved us.

Q Is grace training you? Or are you resisting the very thing that saved you? Grace does not save you and leave you. Grace saves you and trains you. Are you letting it?

~ The commands of Titus 2:2-10 are overwhelming. But the grace of Titus 2:11-14 is sufficient. Christ's saving grace trains you for godliness. That is the author's argument. That is our argument. Grace saves and trains God's people, producing godly conduct. Not by our effort. Not by our performance. Not by our perfection. By grace alone.

Application for Christians

R Because Christ's saving grace is training you, stop resisting. Start pursuing godliness. In every area of your life. In every corner of your life. In every hidden place of your life.

Q So examine your life. Not casually. Not superficially. Really examine it. Where have you been drifting? Confess it. Bring it into the light. Then pursue godliness. Emotional withdrawal in your marriage. Harsh words in your parenting. Workaholism at the office. These are not small things. These are the places where grace is calling you to train.

~ Will you let grace train you? Or will you keep resisting? Older women, will you train younger women? Or will you leave them to figure it out alone? Older men, will you model godliness? Or will you coast into irrelevance? Younger men, will you submit to discipleship? Or will you check out and leave it to others?

P The grace that saved you is not done with you. Stop resisting. Start learning. Pursue godliness.

Application for Non-Christians

~ Because Christ's saving grace has appeared for all people, repent. Turn from your sin. Receive Christ.

Å What does it mean to receive grace? It means to stop trying to save yourself. Stop pretending you can train yourself into godliness. Stop clenching your fists around your own goodness. Stop building your own ladder to heaven. You cannot. You never could.

P Trust Christ. Not your effort. Not your willpower. Not your sincerity. Christ. His grace saves. His grace trains. His grace is enough.

Ø You have tried being better. Trying harder. Doing more. And still you are empty. Still you are lost. Still you are resisting the only One who can save. Will you receive the grace that saves and trains? Or will you walk away? The grace of God has appeared. For you. Repent. Receive.

Conclusion

Ø Who can live like this? That was the question. That was the weight. That was the impossibility we felt at the start. But now we know the answer. Not try harder. Not do better. Grace.

R The command stands. Teach sound doctrine. Sound doctrine produces godliness. The conduct is clear. Live godly lives. In every role. Every season. Every station. Grace produces godliness in the most ordinary places. But the cause changes everything. Christ's grace trains. Grace does not save you and leave you. Grace saves you and trains you.

^ And so Paul give Titus a final charge. Because grace does not save you and leave you. Because grace saves you and trains you. Titus, proclaim these things; and encourage and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.

^ So Christian, stop resisting. Start pursuing. Let grace train you.

^ And Non-Christian, stop pretending you can save yourself. Repent. Receive.

P The grace that saved you will not abandon you. The grace that saved you will train you. The grace that saved you will complete what it has begun.

^ Christ's saving grace trains you for godliness.

P Amen.

Close in prayer